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ABSTRACT

Problems, issues, and options related to the design and implementation phase of an academic program review process are considered. Directed toward administrators and other nonexpert participants in program review, the analysis is intended to assist in the decision of what kind of review is needed, how it might be carried out, and how results might be used. It is assumed that there is no one best way to design and implement a review process and the process should be user-oriented from the outset. Four groups that may be involved in the design of the review process are administrators, faculty members, consultants, and mixed groups. The need to specify and interrelate the types of decisions and information needs, purposes and types of program review, and users of program review is indicated. Three general ways to conduct the review are self-review, external review, and multiple or mixed reviews. Specific groups or staff members who could serve as evaluators within each of these alternative review approaches are specified. Types of program review methodology can be classified as classical experimental and social-anthropological methods. Elements that may be included in overall plan of program review are listed, as are possible implementation groups, implementation procedures, and implementation responsibilities. (SW)

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PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION:

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE REVIEW PROCESS

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Abstract

This paper is one of three which address problems of planning and operating an on-going system of academic program review (Poulton 1978, Heydinger 1978). More specifically, this paper deals with issues and options of the design and implementation phases of program review. It is written primarily for administrators and other non-expert participants in program review. The assumption is that continuing program review can be enhanced by systematic efforts to plan and implement the process and by the active involvement of administrators in design and implementation. Two further assumptions are that: 1) there is no one best way to design and implement a process and 2) the process should be user-oriented from the outset.

Three major areas are addressed:

1) options for designing a review process;

2) issues and elements of design (why, who, and how); and 3) options and strategies for implementation.

PROGRAM REVIEW AND EVALUATION:

DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE REVIEW PROCESS

Efforts to evaluate individual academic programs and to develop systems of comprehensive, on-going program review have been disappointing experiences for many institutions. Systems of program review, as well as the programs they are designed to evaluate, are frequently oversold, ill-designed, and poorly implemented. Consequently, the results have often been of little use and have had little impact.

Clearly, the introduction of a comprehensive, continuing program review process is not the primary solution to every institution's information needs. The conduct of a needs assessment is the critical first step to determining the necessity and feasibility of such a process (Heydinger 1978).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss some of the problems, issues and options related to the design and implementation phase of a program review process, assuming that a needs assessment has established the necessity and the directions of such an organized approach. Most of what is currently written about program review and evaluation is for the professional evaluator; this paper is primarily for administrators and other non-expert participants in program review. The thesis is that on-going program review can be enhanced by systematic efforts to plan and implement the process and by the inclusion of administrators and other users of program review in the myriad of decisions which need to be made about design and implementation. It is intended to assist in deciding what kind of review is needed, how it might be carried out, and how results might be used; these decisions should not be the sole responsibility of evaluators, per se.

Two assumptions guide the discussion which follows. First there is no one best way to design and implement a review process, nor is there one best way to conduct all reviews. Second, chances of operating a successful on-going review process are improved if it is user-oriented from the outset, if considerations of use are built into the design and into implementation strategies rather handled as an afterthought after reviews are completed (Poulton 1978, Heydinger 1978).

Much can be gained from careful attention to design and implementation. However, there are practical constraints. First, we have limited ability to identify information needs with sufficient clarity and sufficient lead time to be able to link the process directly to users and their information needs. This is due in part to uncertainty created by a rapidly changing environment as well as to the complexity of programs and problems themselves. Second, we have limited ability to implement a system of review that equally satisfies the needs of users in different positions and at different organizational levels, including the programs which are subject to evaluation. These constraints mean that design and implementation do not proceed in a neat linear fashion and that they cannot be one-time efforts. Provisions must be made for amending the process, based on unfolding needs and on experience with implementation.

In the sections which follow three areas will be discussed: 1) options for designing a review process; 2) issues and elements of design (purpose, methodology, and evaluators); and 3) options and strategies for implementation.

Options for Designing a Review Process

The development of a review process may typically begin with the quick appointment of a design group which is given a "mandate" to develop a process

but provided with few guidelines as to how to go about it. The point is that from the beginning attention must be given to the process as well as to the content of design because the climate of the institution, the ability and credibility of the people involved, and the style of working and decision making all influence the success of a review process just as it affects a needs assessment (Heydinger 1978). Several options are outlined below in order to expand ideas about how to organize the design of a review process. The assumption is that a needs assessment has already been conducted and that it provides guidance regarding purpose, scope, timing, expected use, and implementation.

Design Groups - Four alternative design groups might be considered: administrative; faculty; consultants; and mixed groups.

[Figure 1 about here]

If the review process is designed by an administrative group or office the process is more likely to fit administrative needs, increased administrative commitment is likely, and design time is shortened. Weaknesses of this approach are that the design is less likely to fit the needs of programs as well as central administrators, commitment to the process below the central level is likely to be low; and persons affected by the process may feel threatened by a speedy process.

Faculty design groups are often used where there are strong norms of faculty participation. This task may be assigned to a standing committee or to a new group. The advantages are that a faculty designed process may increase faculty commitment, legitimize the process and make it more useful to programs. Early faculty involvement may pave the way for increased acceptance of results. On the other hand, the design time is likely to be

FIGURE 1: OPTIONS FOR DESIGNING A REVIEW PROCESS

DESIGN GROUPS	SOURCES AND PROCEDURES	CHARACTERISTICS OF DESIGN PROCESS
. Administrative . Faculty . Consultants . Mixed Group	. Adopted intact from other sources . Adapted from other sources . Specially created for institution	. Open ↔ Closed . Rapid ↔ Extended . Complete ↔ Emergent

extended, utility to and commitment of administrators at all levels may be low.

The use of consultants to design the review process may be an attractive option. The advantages are that design time may be shortened, and a more technically sound process may be developed. The disadvantages are that the consultant may have a "solution in search of a problem"; it may not satisfy institutional needs. There may be less commitment to the process than one designed by other means.

The fourth major option is to use a mixed design group including administrators, faculty and, perhaps, students and consultants. The advantages are that the program review process may be more useful to and have greater support from the persons or groups represented on the design team. However, if extensive compromise is necessary the program review process may be acceptable to all but really useful to few.

Sources and Procedures - The process of developing a system of program review may draw from different sources and follow different procedures. A design process may be adopted intact from external sources. The advantages are that "reinvention of the wheel" may be reduced, design time may be shortened, and a proven process may be adopted. However, what works at one place may not be appropriate for another institution. The obvious alternative is to adapt rather than adopt the external model. The advantages are the same as above and may result in a better fit. On the other hand, the process which emerges may be satisfactory but not highly effective. As an alternative, a design process may be created specifically for the institution, building on the review efforts already underway. It should better meet institutional needs and style of operation. However, that it may be costly in time and resources. Depending on the knowledge and ability of the design team, the process may not represent the "state of the art."

Characteristics of the Design Process - Several other process options merit consideration. The design group may choose to operate in a manner ranging from an open, consultative style to a relatively closed style. Experience suggests that some degree of openness promotes acceptance of the design and of review results. Indeed, the degree of openness desired may influence the selection of the type of design group and vice versa. Likewise, the time it takes to design a process is related to the design group chosen. Clearly, tradeoffs between the composition of the design group and the length of the design period will need to be carefully considered by each institution. A very brief design period may lead a sense of being railroaded, but with an extended design effort the process may lose vital momentum.

The typical approach to the design of both process and content is to attempt to develop a complete, comprehensive design at the outset. An alternative which might be considered is a more emergent or phased approach to design problems. An emergent approach is one which deliberately tables certain aspects or phases of design until they need to be or can be resolved effectively. For example, some design questions might benefit from being decided later in the development based on initial implementation experiences rather than being established from the beginning. However an emergent design strategy should not be employed merely to delay decisions which may be hard and somewhat controversial. In order to be effective many elements, such as purposes, need to be addressed initially and not delayed. An evolving design process may be appropriate when the institution is undergoing rapid change, when there is genuine uncertainty as to how to proceed, and when the institution is not highly experienced in program review. The disadvantages of a phased or emergent approach to design are that the design group may lose sight of purposes, momentum may be lost, and an incomplete design may be viewed as a sign of undesirable by these outside the design group.

Design is a political, value-laden process as well as a technical process. To recapitulate, there is no one best approach to designing a review process. The choice of a design group and procedures should be made in light of the purposes and expected users of program review, institutional norms for participation and consultation, and in view of time and resource constraints. Furthermore, the design process should be selected to facilitate implementation and use. Quality people should be chosen to carry out the effort, people with ability to work in groups as well as those possessing technical skills and knowledge of the institution.

Elements and Issues of Design

Numerous problems and issues of design arise which are related to the overall review process as well as to specific reviews. Three key questions are: why; who, and how. These questions cannot be addressed in isolation from each other nor from the institutional climate. As one writer has stated, "There is no one effective strategy of evaluation in the abstract, separate from the organizational context in which it is introduced or the information using capabilities of people using it (Patton 1978, p.145)." Also see Tripodi et al (1971) and Perkins (1977).

Why: Purposes of Program Review - A needs assessment should have established broad purposes, users to be served, and information needs. The dominant stated purposes of program review are for accountability and program improvement. While the continuing review process may emphasize one of these purposes, it will probably need to accommodate multiple needs.

Questions which are commonly asked are: How effective is the program? How well is it performing in relation to stated objectives? These questions are implicitly or explicitly oriented to an "end view" of a program or at least to the conclusion of a cycle. Programs and units are at different stages of development. Evaluation is useful at each stage but summative

questions are not necessarily appropriate for every program stage. Thus, in developing review designs, strong consideration should be given to a broad range of specific purposes which might be related to different stages of program development and/or to decisions to be made at the respective stages. It is equally important to indicate users or decision makers as well as to identify types of decisions to be made. The relationship between purposes or type of review, information/decision needs, and users are outlined in Figure 2.

[Figure 2 about here]

Four broad purposes or types of program review are outlined: context; input; implementation; and outcome. A number of similar or equivalent types of reviews are grouped together under these board headings. Five types of decisions or information needs are identified: planning; structuring; implementation; continuation; and participation, use, or support. Finally, a variety of users are identified.

Planning/Context - When a new program or major spin-off is under consideration, planning information can be obtained through review and evaluation. Contextual reviews and needs assessment ask: What are the problems and needs to which a program might be addressed? Strategic policy studies ask: What are alternative opportunities? What should the program be doing?

These reviews will probably be initiated and used by key institutional decision makers or groups such as: the dean, the president or other executive officers, and the program executive group. Such studies may also be commissioned or used by external agencies.

Structuring/Input - At the programming stage of development there are other purposes of review and analysis. Input and structuring reviews are

FIGURE 2: PURPOSES, DECISIONS, AND USERS OF PROGRAM REVIEW

TYPES OF DECISIONS AND INFORMATION NEEDS	PURPOSES AND TYPES OF PROGRAM REVIEW	USERS OF PROGRAM REVIEW
. Planning	. Content . Needs Assessment . Strategic Policy Studies	. Dean . Program . Executive Officers
. Structuring/ Programming	. Input Analysis	. Program . Dean . Budget Officers
. Implementation	. Implementation . Compliance . Process . Effort . Management . Design and Logic	. Program . Dean . Participants
. Continuation/ Discontinuation	. Outcome . Impact . Effectiveness . Cost Effectiveness . Design and Logic	. Dean . Program . Executive Officers . Participants
. Participation, Use, or Support	[Any of the Above]	. Present or Potential Participants, Supporters . Students . Alumni . Donors . Agencies

Adapted from Stufflebeam 'etal 1971, Perkins 1977, Taylor 1974.

conducted to determine: How the program should be operated? What resources are required?

Again it is most likely that these reviews will be initiated and used primarily by program personnel and by academic and budgetary decision makers: deans and vice presidents.

Implementation/Management - When a program is actually in operation other formative purposes are served by program review. Implementation, compliance, or process reviews question: Is the program being carried out as planned? Program monitoring and management audits ask: Is the program being effectively and efficiently managed? Another important purpose implementation reviews is to provide a preliminary assessment of the design or logic of the program: Are program objectives clear? Do specified inputs permit the conduct of planned activities? Is there the anticipated demand for the program? Is the planned target population being reached? What are the early outcomes of the program? Does the program design need to be changed?

A variety of persons and groups have a vested interest in implementation reviews. Many will be initiated and/or used by program personnel in order to improve the program. These same reviews may also be of interest and use to deans, executive officers, and external agencies. However, these persons are more likely to initiate and use other types of implementation reviews for accountability purposes, reviews which are of lesser use to the program itself.

Continuation/Outcomes - At any stage of development the continuation or discontinuation of a program may be in question, but these decisions usually occur at the end of one or more cycles of operation. Outcome, impact, and cost effectiveness reviews might ask: Were goals achieved? Was it worth

the effort? Once again, questions of program design and logic are highly important. Rather than only asking "did it work?", it will be useful to some to also assess: How, why (or why not), and to what degree did it work? Also it may be useful to know: What unanticipated outcomes resulted and why? Strategic policy reviews at higher organizational levels may again ask: Should the program continue?

When continuation is not seriously in question, these types of reviews are likely to be initiated and used by the program itself and/or the next organization level. However, if the program is new, or funded largely from external sources, or of questionable quality, or if the institution faces serious financial conditions, then these reviews may be of most use to deans, executive officers and external agencies.

Participation/Use/Support - There are purposes, uses, and users of program review, beyond those discussed. The approach to evaluation is from a different perspective -- that of potential or actual participants, users, or supportors. Here the questions of interest might be: Does the program meet my needs? Is it worthy of my support? A variety of outcome, implementation, and strategic reviews might be of interest and use to participants, to recipients of service, and to supportors. Heretofore, these persons have probably had little access to program review. With the current emphasis on accountability and consumerism, it is likely that these access and use issues will need to be anticipated and addressed in the program review process.

Now that purposes and types of program review have been discussed, the second major design element will be addressed. Who evaluates?

Who: Review Responsibilities - A second important aspect of designing program reviews is the assignment of responsibilities for the conduct of reviews. The purpose of the review and the institutional style of governance will influence the choice of evaluators. Three general approaches are commonly used: self-review; external review; and multiple or mixed reviews.

To begin with, the choice or designation of evaluators may be made by a central review group or major administrator. Alternatively, a central review group might set forth broad guidelines regarding the type of evaluator to be used, (e.g. external evaluators), leaving the choice of evaluators to the college or the program. Another option is to have the choice of evaluators determined jointly by a central review or administrative group and by the program. There are a number of advantages to this latter approach. "Quality control" may be exercised from at least two perspectives, thereby increasing the credibility of the reviewers and the review results.

[Figure 3 about here]

Self-Review is probably the dominant approach to evaluation within higher education. The advantage is that it is generally the most acceptable form for program personnel; therefore, results may be more acceptable to the program than from an external reviews. The disadvantage is that self-review is suspect to those outside the program. Also while self-review may appear "cost free", in reality it may consume valuable faculty resources. Another problem with self-review is determining who constitutes the program: faculty? support staff? students? alumni? all of the above?

External Reviewers offer an alternative to self-evaluation. They may be within the institution but external to the program or completely external. External evaluators may be disciplinary/professional-area specialists or professional evaluators hired by the institution temporarily or permanently. A program may also be subject to accreditation.

FIGURE 3: WHO SHOULD REVIEW

- Self-Review
- External Reviewers
  - Within institution
    - Other faculty
    - Staff Office
  - Outside institution
    - Disciplinary specialists
    - Accreditation teams
    - Professional evaluators
- Multiple/Mixed Reviews
  - Mixed review group
  - Multiple reviews

One advantage of using external evaluators is that objectivity and credibility of the review may be increased. If the program is of questionable quality, if many changes are needed, or if there is much disagreement about future directions, then it might be effective to use external evaluators. There are weaknesses in the external approach. Program personnel fear that external reviewers will miss important nuances of the program, particularly if the review period is brief and if the review team includes non-disciplinary representatives. Another problem is that external reviewers cannot be held responsible for taking action based on the review; consequently, results and recommendations may be more ideal than practical. The cost of employing external reviewers may be a disadvantage to some institutions.

Mixed or Multiple Strategies represent a third option. A program might be subject to both self-review and external evaluation at the same time or at different points in time. Or a single review team might be appointed which includes both external parties and program representatives. Advocacy-advesarial reviews might also be considered.

The primary advantage of a multiple or mixed strategy is that the strengths and weaknesses of self-review and external review may balance each other. The disadvantages are that this approach may take longer, be more costly and more disruptive to the program.

Two principles have been suggested to guide the choice and use of evaluators in an on-going system: (1) there should be multiple and independent feedback to control bias and (2) there should be explicit provisions for renewal and replacement of reviewers or the feedback system will deteriorate severely (Scriven 1975).

Much emphasis is placed on who does evaluation. How it is done is of equal importance. The two questions are related.

How: Program Review Methodology - With the growth in academic program review and evaluation research, debates about methodology have also grown. One school of thought holds that classical experimental or quasi-experimental methods are the only way. Another school of thought has emerged and gained support in recent years. This counter-view holds a broader perspective about the purpose of review and employes more intuitive, anthropological methods. (Hamilton et al 1977, Stake 1975).

More eclectic approaches is now being promoted, drawing on both scientific and anthropological methods depending on the situation. The approaches range from holistic evaluation (Rose and Nyre 1977) to decision-theoretic approaches (Edwards etal 1975).

Since there is much literature available on experimental and quasi-experimental methods, and since those methods are more familiar, little more will be said about them. More attention will be devoted to exploring and comparing alternatives.

[Figure 4 about here]

Characteristics are stated in rather strong, differential terms for purposes of discussion. In reality the characteristcs are not the exclusive domain of the respective models but represent dimensions of choice.

Classical Experimental Methods are drawn for the natural sciences and psychology. Predominant uses are for accountability and specific decision situations. The classic paradigm is characterized by goal-based experimental and quasi-experimental models; they have been documented in the standard works (Campbell and Stanley 1966, Perkins 1977, and Patton 1978). The predominant use is for policy and decision making.

FIGURE 4: COMPARISON OF METHODOLOGIES

METHODS / CHARACTERISTICS	CLASSICAL EXPERIMENTAL METHODS OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND PSYCHOLOGY	SOCIAL-ANTHROPOLOGICAL ECOLOGICAL METHODS
Predominant Use	. Policy and Decision Making	. Understanding and Program improvement
Orientation and Dimensions of Choice	. Measure and Prediction . Quantitative . Deductive . Demonstrative . Uniform . Fixed Systems	. Description and Interpretation . Qualitative . Inductive . Persuasive . Diverse . Dynamic Systems
Models	. Experimental and Quasi-Experimental . Evaluation Research . Goal-Based	. Illuminative Evaluation . Responsive Evaluation . Transactional Evaluation . Goal-Free
ECLECTIC APPROACHES		
	. Holistic Evaluation . Decision-Theoretic Evaluation	

Adapted from: Patton 1978, Hamilton etal 1977, Stake 1975, Scriven 1967, Perkins 1977, Rippey 1973, Campbell and Stanley 1966, Rose and Nyre 1977, Edwards etal 1975.

Social-Anthropological Methods, by way of contrast, draw more from a variety of social sciences stressing anthropological and ecological traditions. The predominant use is for increased understanding and program improvement. Representative approaches include illuminative, transactional, and responsive evaluation. More complete presentations are available (Hamilton etal 1977, Stake 1975, Scriven 1967, Rippey 1973).

Difference in orientation and dimensions of choice have been fully compared by Patton (1978). Classical scientific methods are measurement and prediction oriented and characterized by quantitative, deductive, demonstrative, uniform approaches which are appropriate for relatively fixed systems. By way of contrast, social-anthropological methods have a descriptive and interpretative orientation and are characterized by qualitative, inductive, persuasive, and diverse approaches appropos within more dynamic systems.

Some see the role of program review and evaluation as that of providing definitive answers the specific questions for decision makers at an identifiable point in time. This view of program review fits nicely with the logic of classical methods and with a highly rational view of decision making. In reality we know that the decision process is often strung out, that program reviews are only one of many sources of information which are used, and even the most rigorous evaluation study is rarely conclusive. Considering this context in which we operate, anthropological or eclectic methods would seem to provide designs with sufficient power and objectivity to yield information which is illuminating and useful.

The emergence of the anthropological and eclectic approaches represent a bonafide alternatives to classical models. However, they are alternatives for specific situations and not a complete substitute for scientific methods.

Questions of why, who, and how have been discussed. These questions need to be addressed for the systems of program review as well as for individual reviews. Other design questions primarily pertain to the overall review process. First there are questions of timing: when and how often. Should all programs be reviewed at the same time or on a staggered basis. Should they be reviewed on a regular cycle, say every three to five years, or as needed? Second, there is a question of application. Should the design and timing be implemented uniformly across all programs or should there be variable applications? Third, there is a closely related matter of emphasis. Should stress be upon conducting the best individual reviews one-by-one in a somewhat unique fashion or upon conducting comparable reviews also to be used in secondary analysis? Fourth, questions of comprehensiveness arise. Should all programs and all aspects of programs be subject to review or only selected areas? Fifth, there are judgments about detail. Should highly detailed designs be mandated or should more general guidelines be suggested? Finally, the question of openness: Should results be widely available or should they be confidential?

All of these represent significant design and implementation issues and the more fully addressed in the context of implementation.

Design Outcomes - The primary outcomes of the overall design stage should include: a plan of program review; and implementation strategies and documents. The overall plan of program review might well include the following elements: 1) statement of purposes, expected results, and expected uses; 2) criteria for judging results of the review process and/or for judging designs of specific reviews; 3) specification of administrative responsibilities and policies for: conducting reviews and distributing results; monitoring implementation; and for providing information;

4) design policies and guidelines or specifications; 5) procedures and responsibilities for identifying new information needs and updating review plans; and for evaluating the review process itself; 6) resource requirements (staff and dollars); and 7) a summary schedule of program reviews.

Implementation strategies and documents might well include: 1) provisions for communication, orientation, and training; 2) supporting guidelines and instructions; 3) provisions for on-going consultation and assistance; 4) specification of other management and coordination responsibilities and 5) plans for utilization.

Options for Implementing a Review Process

The preceeding discussions of needs assessment and design may have conveyed the impression that the keys to success are careful preparation and thoughtful design. In the long run the greatest difficulty may not be in devising "better policies and designs" but in devising more effective means for putting policies and plans into operation (Williams 1977).

In other words, there is the need to devote considerable attention to implementation in addition to outlining purposes and methodologies. The separation of design from implementation will probably be fatal to the operation of an on-going system program review.

[Figure 5 about here]

Implementation can be considered in three stages: introduction; initial operation; and mature operation. This paper deals more with the first two, while Poulton (1978) addresses the latter question.

Implementation Groups - The strengths and weaknesses of using various groupings have been discussed in relation to needs assessment (Heydinger 1978) and to design of the overall review process. By and large the same comments pertain to the designation of implementation groups, groups which will introduce, manage and use Program review. Administrative, faculty,

FIGURE 5: OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING PROGRAM REVIEW

IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS	IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES	DIMENSIONS OF CHOICE FOR THE PROCESS
. CENTRAL/OVERALL . ADMINISTRATIVE . FACULTY . MIXED . COLLEGE . DEPARTMENTS/PROGRAMS	. PILOT TEST . CONCURRENT IMPLEMENTATION . PHASED IMPLEMENTATION . ROLLING . SEGMENTAL . MIXED . COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION/ MULTIPLE SOURCES	. COMPREHENSIVE ⟷ SELECTIVE . CYCLICAL ⟷ AS NEEDED . UNIFORM ⟷ DIVERSE . OPENNESS ⟷ CONFIDENTIALITY . INDEPENDENT ⟷ INTEGRATED

IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

. COMMUNICATION AND TRAINING	. STAFF SUPPORT	. SECONDARY REVIEW
. PROCESS MANAGEMENT: . PLANNING . ORGANIZING . MONITORING	. COLLECTION AND PROVISION OF INFORMATION . DISSEMINATION	. CONSIDERATION AND ACTION . FEEDBACK ON INTERPRETATION AND USE
. CONTINUING ADVICE AND CONSULTATION		. FORMATIVE EVALUATION . RENEWAL OF PROCESS

or mixed groups might be assigned continuing responsibilities for aspects of implementation. If a central purpose of the review process is to contribute to collegiate and/or to institutional decision-making, then it will be imperative to have major responsibility lodged in administrative or mixed groups. However, if the primary payoff is intended to be for programs themselves, then faculty-based or mixed groups may be preferable. If a comprehensive system is to be introduced, then the designation of implementation groups or persons will need to be made at the collegiate and, perhaps, at the program level.

Review Procedures - Complete design and emergent design strategies have been discussed. Implementation procedures can be logically linked to the preferred design option or vice versa. Program review may be pilot tested with one or more programs. If there is uncertainty about basic design and process questions, then valuable insights and experience may be gained. Time invested up-front may pay off with time saved in the long run. On the other hand, it may be difficult to find cooperative, representative test sights. If there is considerable experience with program review, or if there is reasonable certainty about design and procedures, then little may be gained from the pilot test. Pilot tests may either increase or decrease acceptance of an support for program review.

Concurrent implementation is often considered. The strengths are that rapid implementation is possible, thereby yielding results more quickly. However, there is high risk of failure. It requires much time at all levels of the institution; competing or conflicting activities may delay implementation.

Successful concurrent implementation requires highly skilled leadership and participants, and probably a large support staff. It is a strategy which is probably more appropriate for a one-shot institutional self-study

or ten-year accreditation visit than for on-going program review.

Phased implementation is the obvious alternatives to simulataneous involvement. Three slightly different approaches are worth considering. Using a rolling schedule, a selected number of programs might be subject to complete review each year. The strengths are that the overall time commitment is reduced, results should be available sooner, reviews can be scheduled to achieve a better fit with information needs and competing activities. The disadvantages are that the overall implementation time is extended, and momentum and commitment may be reduced. Likewise, utility of secondary, comparative reviews may be diminished because of "old data."

A phased alternative is a segmental approach. If program review is broken up into different stages (e.g. goal setting) or into selective subjects (e.g. undergraduate curriculum), then all program may undergo this more limited review at the same time, but with reduced time commitments. The segmental approach may lead to a more effective review of cross-program issues or problems, but by definition it does not result in a holistic picture of a program at one point in time.

A mixed approach is also viable for some institutions. All programs might be subject to concurrent involvement in one stage of program review such as goal setting, but involved on a variable schedule thereafter.

Coordinated Implementation describes an effective approach taken by some institutions. Implementation procedures outlined above have assumed a single, integrated system is being introduced; the existence of independent review efforts already in operation at various levels within the institution was not explicitly acknowledged in the prior options. In reality, much program review is probably already going on. The effective design and implementation strategy may be more one of coordinating reviews initiated from

a number of sources and "filling in the gaps" rather than one of implementing a replacement system or a redundant system. The resulting system of program review will probably be inelegant in design and difficult to coordinate. But, by building on existing program review efforts, greater support may be garnered and implementation time reduced.

Dimensions of Choice for the overall review process were introduced in the design section and merit further consideration here. In the design stage there is often an intellectual appetite for comprehensive information from all programs, but when results flow in people are generally interested in or able to use only selected information. The primary rationale for obtaining comprehensive information is simply that--by being comprehensive it has the potential for answering unanticipated as well as known questions. Overcollection of information will probably occur if the design stage excludes considerations of use, and/or if those who are in a position to use results are not actively involved in the design. The design team may also attempt to include something for everyone as a strategy for reducing conflict or gaining acceptance. However, the paraphrase Wildavsky, "If evaluation is everything, maybe it's nothing!"

Obtaining comprehensive information is expensive in terms of collection time and is costly relative to its use. It still may represent a desirable and legitimate choice when base-line information can be justified; however, as a continuing strategy it is questionable.

A related question is whether all programs should be scheduled for review on a regular cycle of say five to seven years, or reviewed when significant periodic changes take place (e.g., changes in program leadership), or reviewed "as needed." Establishing a cycle helps to ensure that review will take place; thus, it provides for continuity of process even though key participants change. The rationale is that after five to seven years

every program will need to be reviewed; this remains to be proven. A more important limitation is that problems and opportunities do not occur on a pre-determined cycle. Likewise, programs have different natural cycles, related in part to the curriculum and in part to the external environment. Conducting review "as needed" is an attractive approach; it results in the provision of limited but highly useful information. This option may be problematic since it rests on someone's or some group's perception of need. However, reviews may not be anticipated with sufficient lead time or may not be initiated even when other persons have a bonafide need for information. If this approach is taken, the decision to review should not be left for programs to decide alone.

The strategy selected may be to implement a uniform process across all programs or to allow or even encourage diverse applications. The dimension pertains both to content and process. The rationale of a uniform approach is to facilitate implementation and the conduct of comparable reviews. However it is practically impossible to devise a process and design equally appropriate for the needs and norms of all programs. Thus, a more diverse approach will probably gain greater acceptance and be of greater use to programs, but may yield less valuable information for collegiate and central administrators. Also, a diverse process will be more difficult to manage; maintaining purposes and review quality may be problematic.

One of the most controversarial questions concerns confidentiality versus openness in the conduct of reviews and in access to results. Experience and research would suggest that a relatively open-process of collecting information is likely to be effective. However, there are definite pros and cons regarding access to results. Programs are generally and understandably reluctant to have negative reviews made widely available;

likewise they have a vested interest in distributing positive results. Administrators charged with considering and acting on program reviews may be in favor of confidential reviews, regardless of whether results are psoitive or negative, because it allows them to exercise more discretion. The rationale for confidential reviews is that more candid views will be expressed and individuals will be spared embarrassment. The rationale for making review results public is that change is more likely if finding are widely known, that it is almost impossible to preserve confidentiality, and that openness is more in keeping with academic norms and current social trends.

Regardless of the stance, agreement on access and distribution should be specified or negotiated in advance of the actual review.

One final dimension for consideration is the degree to which the system of program review should be independent of or integrated with the planning and budgeting systems. The purposes and primary users of the system of review guide the degree of integration; whether the program review is historical, current, or future-oriented will affect the use (Dressel 1976).

Timeliness is likely to be a continuing problem. Timing that is desirable from the standpoint of the program under review is very often different from the timing necessary to fit well with the institutional planning and budgeting cycle. These questions are explored in greater detail by Poulton (1978).

The dimensions of choice have been discussed separately. In fact, there is a tendency for particular choices to be associated with each other. Further, there is a tendency for certain choices to be introduced in a new system of review, while others characterize a more mature process.

For example, new systems of program review are likely to be characterized by a comprehensive, cyclical, and relatively uniform approach; as systems develop and as experience is gained, the process is likely to be more selective and variable in application. Provisions for adopting the system of program review are necessarily for mantaining an effective, on-going process.

Design and Implementation Criteria - Numerous design and implementation options have been outlined. Problems have been discussed including those which are of a conceptual, technical, ethical, socio-political, and managerial nature. Choices and solutions must be made. If design decisions are made with knowledge and forethought, then chances of success are improved. To reiterate, questions of what, why, how, who and when are interdependent. Criteria which might be applied to the myriad of options are outlined below (Stufflebeam 1974).

Utility

.Relevance
.Importance
.Credibility
.Scope
.Feasibility
.Timeliness

Technical Adequacy

.Validity .Reliability .Objectivity

Cost Effectiveness

Implementation Responsibilities represent one final key to successful, on-going program review. Major responsibilities for: communication and training; staff support; advice and consultation; information provision; dissemination; secondary review; consideration and action; feedback;

formative evaluation; adoptation; and overall management of the review process. The overall review plan should make clear these responsibilities.

Much of the preceeding discussion has been stated in terms of groups, of the process, and the system. At every juncture it is not just the group or the organization but the people, the individuals involved which make it work. The importance of personal involvement and the assumption of individual responsibilities are articulated in Patton 1978 and House 1977.

Summary

The purpose of this paper has been to explore options and issues related to the design and implementation of an on-going system of program review. Alternatives for organizing the design process have been outlined, issues related to the process and content of the design have been addressed, and implementation options have been presented. It is not possible to select a single method or approach "for all seasons." To paraphase T.S. Eliot, we cannot design a system so perfect that no one will need to be good. Along the way it must be remembered that "organizations do not consume information; people do-individual, idiosyncratic, caring, uncertain, searching people." (Patton 1978, p. 75).

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